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Springfield News-Sun (Springfield, Ohio) · Wed, May 5, 1993 · Page 27
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Palace producer has big screen plans for Marin

MARILYN BECK
WITH STACY JENEL SMITH

HOLLYWOOD — Cheech Marin doesn't have to worry if his *The Golden Palace* series isn't renewed. Paul Witt, who produces the series with his wife, Susan Harris, and Tony Thomas, has big movie plans for Marin.

At Witt's behest, Cheech has scripted *The Gardener*, which acclaimed filmmaker Luis Valdez has already agreed to direct.

The project, which Witt at this point is solely financing, will have Cheech playing an East Los Angeles gardener who loses his truck, "and with it his livelihood. He goes about getting it back — and in the process restores his relationship with his teen-age son."

The former counterculture comic also has a kids' show in the works, spinning off from his successful *My Name is Cheech, the Schoolbus Driver* album. In addition he's being pitched for a myriad of other *Schoolbus Driver* tie-ins, including, "an interactive video, books, merchandise. I'm listening to everyone's ideas." He's also writing songs for his second children's album.

MIXED MEDIA: After years of trying, *Glengarry Glen Ross* producer Jerry Tokofsky has nabbed screen rights to Frank O'Rourke's 1957 novel, *The Man Who Found His Way*, a psychological western set in the early 1900s about four bank robbers who try one last job — with tragic results that change their lives.

The Man Who Found His Way came close to being a movie once before. Gary Cooper purchased its screen rights in the late '50s — but died of cancer before the film could be made.

Meanwhile, Tokofsky is proceeding with plans to adapt John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* to screen. He acquired rights to the saga about the unionization of the apple orchard workers in the '30s from the Steinbeck estate last year and now reports Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Robert Schenwkan (*Kentucky Cycle*) is settling down to write the *In Dubious Battle* script.

KEEPING MUM: Arsenio Hall's representatives say he — and they — will have no comment about the National Enquirer excerption of *Arsenio: The Prince of Late Night*, the upcoming HarperCollins book that alleges the late night star has had a long-term drug habit. His aides have attempted to secure an advance copy of the text — and he reportedly offered $1,000 to any of them who achieved that feat — but the publishers turned thumbs down.

DOESN'T HURT TO HOPE: Footage of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers was included in the Bob Hope special that was taped last weekend — but it might not make it onto the actual show that NBC will air May 14. You might recall that Astaire's widow, Robyn — who inherited sole control of the use of her late husband's name and film image — prevented CBS from including clips of Fred and Ginger in its broadcast of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' tribute to Rogers.

Bob Hope's daughter Linda, one of the producers of the three-hour NBC salute to Bob's 90th birthday, reports that their Astaire/Rogers clip came from an Academy Awards telecast. She notes that, "The Motion Picture Academy owns rights to the material — and they're letting us have it." She does concede they might ultimately have to go to Robyn, "and if we do we'll probably get the same answer the Kennedy Center people got. But maybe not. Dad and Fred Astaire were friends — and maybe she'll have a change of heart."

A DOUBLE DOSE: Those Olsen twins keep getting busier. The 6-year-old *Full House* regulars, whose first network TV special airs tonight on ABC — with Tim Allen, Joey Lawrence and the Minnesota Twins — start production on their first telepic June 3. It's called *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble* and has the girls playing sisters (what else?) who try to help their impoverished parents by seeking help from their scary, rich Aunt Agatha — who turns out to have a kind twin. Casting for that dual role is under way.

WHAT'S ON PEOPLE

Television A Double Dose

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Apr 11, 2025

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